

## Briefing

# Iowa School Health Services and the Licensed Practical Nurse in the School

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## Introduction

The goal of Iowa School Health Services is to provide services enabling healthy students to achieve academically. Education and health laws govern the delivery of safe, effective, and accessible student health services in Iowa schools. Qualified health professionals, education personnel, school boards, and school health committees collaborate to provide these school health services. This briefing describes the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) practice in the school according to laws, professional standards, health service delivery, and definitions. In Iowa school districts, the LPN may provide services in two ways. One, the LPN provides services with the direction of the School Registered Nurse (SRN) in the same building. Two, the LPN provides services for an individual student designated in the student's individualized health plan (IHP) and the emergency plan (EP) under the direction of the SRN.

## LPN Practice and Iowa Laws

The LPN is accountable for practicing in accordance with the Iowa Code and Iowa Administrative Code (IAC). A summary of the LPN practice follows (online at <http://www.state.ia.us/nursing>):

- Understands the LPN scope of practice legal implications while carrying out supportive or restorative services **under the registered nurse (RN) or physician direction** [655 IAC 6.3(1)],
- Participates in the nursing process assisting the RN to monitor, observe, and report [655 IAC 6.3(2)],
- Performs activities not requiring the knowledge and skill of the RN [655 IAC 6.3(3)],
- Practices in a school **under the RN or physician direction in the same building** [655 IAC 6.3(6)b],
- Understands accountability for performing only activities in the LPN scope of practice, seeks assistance when activities are beyond the scope of the LPN preparation, performs assigned and delegated activities informing the RN when the activities are not executed, carrying out the medical regimen prescribed by a physician, and wears a LPN identification [655 IAC 6.3(9)], and
- Provides **individual student** supportive and restorative care **in the school according to the student's health plan under the direction of the RN employed by the school** district [655 IAC 6.6(2)].

The Iowa Board of Nursing approves education programs preparing practical nurse candidates [Iowa Code §152.5(2001)]. The education is at least one academic year of basic curriculum in nursing theory and practice leading to eligibility to apply for the national licensure examination and Iowa LPN licensure [655 IAC 2.1(1)]. This education prepares the LPN to work in structured care settings under the direction of an RN or physician.

## LPN Health Service Delivery and Standards of Practice

The school administrator [Iowa Code 271.1(1)(2004)] coordinates, supervises, and directs the activities of the School Registered Nurse (SRN). In turn, the SRN delegates, monitors, and evaluates LPN health service delivery and reports to the administrator. The chart below differentiates the nursing process performance of the SRN and LPN. Under the direction of the SRN, the LPN may provide the following health services: medication administration; first aid; immunization review and recording; completing factual information reports; sending routine notices to parents; assisting with activities such as screening, and others.

### Health Services Delivery Model-Nursing Process-SRN and LPN Performance Comparison

Nursing Process	School Registered Nurse (SRN)	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
Assessment	Provides the initial assessment and oversees ongoing assessment. Conducts review of school and health records, interviews individuals knowledgeable about the student, observes the student in the school setting, and conducts physical assessments as warranted.	Initial assessment outside scope of practice. Following RN initial assessment, performs ongoing health assessment (collects, reports, and records data in an accurate and timely manner) in the individualized health plan (IHP) and emergency plan (EP). Notifies the SRN of any changes.
Nursing Diagnosis	Uses information from the assessment process to develop outcomes directing the IHP and EP.	Participates by assisting the SRN.

Outcome Identification	Identifies IHP and EP health care goals.	Participates by assisting the SRN.
Planning	Designs and documents the IHP and EP care.	Provides data and assists with identification of priorities for goal setting.
Implementation	Delivers health services using RN knowledge and skills. Delegates and educates others in tasks not requiring nursing skills and knowledge and retains accountability.	Provides care to student with health needs under the SRN direction within the laws and standards. Documents interventions and student responses.
Evaluation	Conducts in-depth ongoing analysis of student responses, progress on goals, and needed IHP and EP modification to attain optimal health status.	Provides the SRN with subjective and objective data related to nursing interventions and student responses.
IHP and EP	Writes plans and educates others to provide the services as appropriate.	Assists and implements plan as delegated by SRN.

Adapted from: Iowa Board of Nursing, 2001; Schwab, N. C., Hootman, J., Gelfman, M. H., Gregory, E. K., & Pohlman, K. J., 2001; and Washington State Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission & Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2000.

## Summary

This briefing discusses the LPN role in providing student school health services at school to enhance student health and academic achievement. The LPN provides supportive or restorative care under the supervision of the SRN in the same building. The LPN also may provide care to an individual student in accordance with the student's health plan. **The care is delegated and directed by the SRN.** The LPN laws, professional standards, and health service delivery determine the LPN role in Iowa School Districts.

## Definitions

**Administrator.** A person licensed to coordinate, supervise, or direct the activities of other practitioners [Iowa Code §271.1(1)].

**Delegation.** The SRN, in collaboration with the education team, assigns the performance of the health service(s) in a selected situation, not requiring the registered nurse knowledge and skill level, by the delegation decision-making process [Iowa Code § 152.1(2)(c)]. The recommendation of the licensed health personnel receives primary consideration. When the decision of the team members differ, a dissenting opinion may be filed (281 IAC 41.51). The RN instructs and supervises the personnel performing health service(s). Additional references: Iowa Code 152.1(2)(c) and 655 IAC 6.2(5).

**Direction.** Assessment, delegation, evaluation, and documentation under the supervision and monitoring of the RN. Levels include physically present, available at the same site, and available on call [281 IAC 41.96(1)].

**Health Service Policy.** "Health services are part of comprehensive school improvement, assisting all students to increase learning, achievement, and performance. Health services support existing programs to assist each student in achievement of an optimal state of physical, mental and social well being and facilitate continuity and linkages between the school, home, and community" [281 IAC 12.9(11) and IASB, 2001].

**Health Services.** Includes, but is not limited to, service(s) for individuals whose health status, stable or unstable, requires interpretation or intervention, administration of health procedures and health care, or use of a health device to compensate for the reduction or loss of a body function [281 IAC 41.96(1)].

**Individualized Health Plan (IHP) and Emergency Plan (EP).** A written confidential document detailing the desired outcomes and provision of the health service(s) in the education program [281 IAC 41.96(1)].

**Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN).** The LPN legal minimum practice is in the Iowa Code Chapter 152 and 655 IAC §6.3-6.

**Nursing Process.** The decision-making method used as the organizational framework for the practice of nursing. The school nurse uses when determining the student health service plan including assessment, nursing diagnosis, outcome identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation. The documentation of the process, plan, and components are ongoing.

**Restorative and supportive care.** Provide nursing care to help maintain or correct student's health status.

**Registered Nurse (RN).** Licensed to practice nursing by board of nursing to formulate nursing diagnoses, conduct nursing treatment, carry out physician instructions, supervise, teach, and evaluate the LPN performing nursing care activities, perform additional services requiring education and training, and apply scientific principles (Iowa Code Chapter 152 and 655 IAC 6).

**School Registered Nurse (SRN).** Licensed to practice in accordance with the laws, regulations, standards (NASN & ANA, 2001), and the Code of Ethics (NASN, 1999).

*"School Nursing is a specialized practice of professional nursing that advances the well being, academic success, and life-long achievement of students. To that end, school nurses facilitate positive student responses to normal development; promote health and safety; intervene with actual and potential health problems; provide case management services; and actively collaborate with others to build student and family capacity for adaptation, self management, self advocacy, and learning (NASN online at <http://www.nasn.org>)."*

**Standards.** Authoritative statements, defining acceptable school nursing practice, by the nursing profession describing the quality of practice, service, or education (NASN & ANA, 2001).

References available.

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